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WOMEN
AND OTHER ENIGMAS

WOMEN

AND OTHER ENIGMAS

BEING CERTAIN MEDITATIONS
OF MY FRIEND THE CYNIC

Laurens Maynard

I, Madame, am a Toy Philosopher—Anatol

RICHARD G. BADGER
THE GORHAM PRESS, BOSTON

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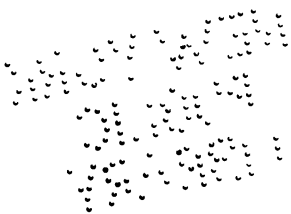
The Gorham Press, Boston, U. S. A.

TO MY WIFE

FROM WHOM I HAVE NEVER LEARNED
ANY OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF
MY FRIEND THE CYNIC
EXCEPT THE TRUTH OF HIS REMARK
ON SUCCESSFUL MATRIMONY
THAT
THE MAN WHO HAS BEEN LUCKY ENOUGH
TO BREAK THE BANK AT MONTE CARLO
IS GENERALLY THE LAST MAN
TO ADVISE HIS FRIENDS
TO TRY GAMBLING



I AM *about to publish a book — said My Friend The Cynic — to be entitled WHAT I KNOW ABOUT WOMEN.*

That would seem to be an endless task — said The Sweet Girl — and besides, it might be suppressed.

On the contrary — he replied — the book would be quite harmless and the task a very easy one. Indeed it would require only one printed page to contain the title and my motto, which Marcel Schwob attributes to Pope Innocent III — Lord, I am very old and Thou knowest that I know nothing. *The rest of the book would consist of blank leaves — as many as the women I have known.*

All dat we knows about wimmens is dat dey is wimmens — says Friedman's Beggar in his Autobiography.

But in these days of advanced research into the psychology of sex — commented The Clever Lady — we cannot always be sure that we know that.

The Women, God help them — was My Friend The Cynic's toast — they have their troubles and they make ours.

WOMEN
AND OTHER ENIGMAS

I BEGAN life — said My Friend The Cynic — as a callowly morbid pessimist. It is a common affectation of youthful precocity — which rarely survives the period of what is vulgarly but expressively known as Calf Love. Neither argument nor experience is required to dispel this pseudo-philosophy. It disappears as naturally as—and not much later than — the milk teeth.

Then followed a period of irrationally effervescent optimism when "everything was for the best in this best of all possible worlds." Not being blessed with

the patience or the obtuseness of Candide, I, of course, soon found this position untenable and took refuge in the cheerful cynicism which has given me my name and which I have found to be the only logically sound position that even a "toy philosopher" can assume toward life.

From the very derivation of his name the Cynic's comments are regarded as the barkings of the dog, but there is as great a difference in barks as there is in dogs, and the cheerful ringing challenge of the good-humored watchdog is the cynicism which I praise and would wish to exemplify. For, indeed, your True Cynic is no sour-visaged misanthrope. He does not sulk in his tent and refuse to play the game of life. But it is

this cheerful cynicism that enables him to file a demurrer to every buffet of adverse fortune. Lest every one who hears me may not have sat at the feet of Gamaliel, let me explain that one of the few scraps of legal lore which remains from my early studies is the Professor's definition of a demurrer as meaning *Well, what of it?*

Old Omar was your most cheerful cynic. Did he waste any tears or suffer any heartaches over woman's inconstancy? Nay. And did he forswear women because they were inconstant and ungrateful? Again nay. Listen to this true cheerful cynic's demurrer to feminine fickleness:

O Love, my love, the world is weary wise,
My only happiness is in thine eyes.

Oh, wrap me soft in their illusive spell,
For well I know that they are also lies.

Why should I refuse to take the joy of the temporary possession of beauty and warmth because they may not last? Will the world have none of Spring's bloom and breezes because they are only transitory? Nay, nay!

Old Earth believes his ancient lies once more
And runs to meet him in a golden coat.

So with myself, I am always ready to be deceived if only I may have the actual net profits of th fraud while it lasts.

IN THE days of my youth — remarked My Friend The Cynic — I adored women and I approached them humbly upon my knees like a devout worshipper, not daring to raise my eyes before their loveliness and happy if I might be permitted to kiss their little shoes. And then I was surprised when they invariably responded to my homage with a kick which very naturally fell upon my face. It was no more than I deserved and should have expected. Had my face been where it should have been, they could not have kicked it.

And indeed — he continued reflectively — I do not believe that they would have bitten it.

LIKE Shakespeare — said My Friend The Cynic — I do not hesitate to appropriate another's utterance when I can use it to good advantage, and therefore I am grateful to The Understanding Lady who defined for me the difference between the Masterful Man and the Mere Male Brute.

The Masterful Man — said she — knows what a woman wants to do and makes her do it, often, indeed, before she is herself conscious of her own desire.

The Mere Brute attempts to make her do what he wishes without trying to learn whether she wants to or not.

THE unsophisticated youth — observed My Friend The Cynic — is very apt to think that a virgin sacrifice of untarnished first affection would be regarded by a woman as a priceless offering which should go far toward rendering his suit successful. But this illusion is very quickly dispelled and the seasoned lover knows that the surest way to storm the citadel of a woman's heart is by making her a confidant of his former conquests. Indeed, so long as he does not betray names, he need not hesitate to disclose the details of by just what stratagems he has won his spurs in his earlier tournaments of love. So far from being forearmed by such forewarning her reasoning seems rather to be, *if he could win others he must be worth while for me.*

IF WE fail with women — exclaimed My Friend The Cynic — it is not because we are ignorant of the rule of the game, but often because we have not the heart to follow it, for the rule is — Brutality. The Coster beats his wife and she loves him devotedly, for he has learned that *it's kicks, not kisses, as keeps love constant.* Of course, a beating will not always serve the same purpose in a higher station of life, but this does not disprove the rule, since to the more sensitively organized woman a sarcastic word, or even look, is often more delicately brutal than a blow.

YOUR diatribes against my sex are ridiculous — protested The Intelligent Lady to My Friend The Cynic. Why don't you go for once to some honest woman and let her tell you the truth about women?

Because, my dear — he replied — I am not at all interested in self-consciousness, and autobiography loses all its real value when it is fictitious.

You make the common mistake — he continued — of presuming that a good woman is by any necessity an honest woman. Now the fact is it is practically impossible for the best woman in the world to comply with the witness stand requirement that she shall tell *the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.* But this, in

most cases, does not imply on her part any wish to deceive, but is because she is utterly unable to comprehend that a fact which she does not happen to like can have any material bearing upon the case at issue.

And conversely, just as in jurisprudence *Equity regards those things as done which ought to be done*, so in a woman's mind those things only are true which she wants to believe.

THERE are various degrees of hypnotism — observed The Patient Wife in conversation with My Friend The Cynic. I have often noticed that when my husband looks me in the eye and tells me something, I find myself agreeing with him though I am perfectly satisfied that what he says is not so.

I quite understand you — he replied — but you are wrong in ascribing this credulousness to hypnotism. It is merely an exemplification of that mental process in a woman that serves her instead of the sense of logic. Mr. Dooley once expressed this better than I can hope to do when he said, "If you told a woman that Columbus discovered America she'd say, I don't believe that odious old rep-

tile ever discovered anything, but if you told her that Padarewski done it she'd believe you." And your case is only an exemplification of his further statement: "If there's anything you want a woman to believe take her by the hand and look her in the face. It may be she'll say — *He has nice eyes, I guess what he says must be true.*"

SAID My Friend The Cynic — And what is he thinking of, to marry at his age!

Is he then so old? — queried The Sweet Girl.

Old, no indeed — he replied — that is what I complain about. Do you not know — he continued — that there are two periods when it is fitting and proper that a man should marry? The first is between twenty and thirty, for then he knows no better, and the other is between sixty and eighty, for then he needs a guardian.

I TOOK my wife and my sweetheart together to dinner — said The Man Old Enough To Know Better — but that was entirely proper because my wife and my sweetheart are fond of each other.

Nonsense! — replied My Friend The Cynic — you mean that they kiss each other with their fingers crossed.

MY WIFE, in an understanding moment — said The Young Husband — told me that, if I felt restive under the restraint of matrimony, I could take a vacation; but as an afterthought she added that she was not sure she would take me back again.

In other words — said My Friend The Cynic — with true feminine logic she thinks a vacation is the same thing as being fired from a steady job.

WHEN your wife offers you any freedom of action in affairs of the heart — said My Friend The Cynic to The Youthful Benedict — it should be accepted in the same spirit in which the wise British official accepts the tribute brought in by the Afghan Hill Chief — which he touches and remits.

The spirit prompting the offering is deserving of appreciation, even though your deeper knowledge tells you that it would not do to take advantage of it.

And, indeed — he continued — the worst excuse in the world to offer to a woman as a reason for any act is to remind her that she told you to do it.

SLEEP — observed My Friend The Cynic — is often the only avenue of escape for the married man by which he can successfully isolate himself from his environment without being reproachable for desertion.

I have sometimes thought — he continued — that a dainty box filled with tiny pellets of morphia would make an ideal wedding present. Even if misunderstood at first it would sooner or later demonstrate its usefulness and perhaps give comfort and satisfaction at a period when most of the wedding gifts had become broken or worn out.

WHY do you vent all your spleen on the women? — asked The Indignant Lady of My Friend The Cynic. I have never heard you make any criticism of the men. Do you consider them perfect?

On the contrary — he replied — I do not think you ever heard me speak of them at all. So far from considering them perfect, I do not think they are worth talking about.

MRS. GRAYMARE'S brilliant husband — remarked The Witty Lady — is like a nine spot in the pack. He makes a brave show but seldom takes any tricks.

In other words — said My Friend The Cynic — he is what my Cockney Cabby once described as *tuppence ha'penny worth of Gawd 'elp us.*

The average husband — he continued — may be fittingly compared to the odor of the automobile, or in other words the gasoline that makes the car go — not pleasing but highly necessary.

GOD only knows — said My Friend The Cynic — and I sometimes think He has forgotten what Woman originally was or might naturally have become. For countless generations she has been warped into artificial shapes not less mentally and spiritually than physically.

The shoes that have deformed and made useless the feet of the Chinese lady find their counterpart not only in the corsets that have ruined the lungs of her Caucasian sister, but just as truly in the limitations of thought and conduct that have been imposed upon her, not so much by her al leged Lord and Master Man a by the aggregation of her sist women who collectively form th spectre of propriety known *Mrs. Grundy.*

And in nothing — he continued — does the inconsistency of the feminine mind more thoroughly reveal itself than in the practical application to modern life of the whims of this same *Mrs. Grundy.* Not only are the sins of to-day, which she pursues with jealous revenge in her living sisters, glorified in maudlin sentimentality when they happened long enough ago to be committed by Heloise or Francesca, but even among her contemporaries she is discreetly and complacently blind to relations existing between a couple of popular favorites and vindictively revengeful upon the suspected peccadilloes of the socially unpopular.

AN INTERESTING and a significant phase in the psychology of Woman — said My Friend The Cynic — is the persistence in the highest culture of the basic elements of the nature of the savage. Not only is this shown in woman's love of barbaric ornament and her joy in the possession of the trophies of slaughter for self-adornment, but it manifests itself passively in the ruthless in difference of a woman's hea toward the suffering of those who she does not happen to care f and actively in her cruelty wh her anger is aroused.

It is said that the captives of Indians dreaded not so much assaults of the painted brav the diabolical ingenuity of squaws when they were allov

participate in the tortures. Many a man in our midst has had sad reason to know that the average good woman when her jealousy is aroused can give points in the refinements of torture to the red Indian savage and beat her at the game.

The rules of fair fighting also mean nothing to a woman. If she does not definitely voice the question her whole course of action shows that she naïvely asks, *Why shouldn't I hit him below the belt? I can knock him out much more quickly in that way!*

IT IS always — said My Friend The Cynic — less easy to forgive those whom we have wronged than those who have wronged us; and this characteristic of human nature is often the cause of the bitterness of the resentment manifested by a woman toward the object of her jealousy.

The vindictive fury with which the good wife runs amuck at the hussy whom she suspects of having stolen her husband's affection is apt to be significant evidence that, whatever she may persuade herself as to the facts of the wrong she thinks she has suffered, subconsciously she knows that if she has lost anything it has been through her own inability to hold, and what she is unable to forgive is not the other woman's fascina-

tion but her own neglect to exercise sufficiently her own powers of attraction.

She also knows subconsciously that it would have been easier for her to have held than for the other woman to have taken, for a well-kept husband is as slow to wander from home as a well-fed dog, and in Love as in Law possession is nine points in the game.

THE longer I live — said My Friend The Cynic — the more I am compelled to believe that the average woman's heart works very much like the automatic machine I once saw in a Paris restaurant which yielded up its sweets in due proportion to what was dropped into the slot.

Perhaps to avoid the suspicion of venality which I did not intend — he continued — a better simile would be that a woman's heart is like a mirror of polishe steel, which not only reflects th smiles that are bestowed upon i but which, though cold in itse quickly absorbs the warmth that given to it until it often becon too hot to handle with safety.

IF YOU write so bitterly about women — said The Debutante to My Friend The Cynic — your book will find readers only among the men.

You are quite mistaken, my child — he replied — and I have advised my publishers to bind the volume so that it may look attractive for a Lady's boudoir.

If you do not already realize it — he continued — you will soon learn that no individual woman is offended by animadversions against Woman generically, for her egotism is always sufficient to convince her that she is an exception to all limitations of sex. And, moreover, her instinctive dislike of her sister women leads her to welcome the use of any hatchet she may find ready for her hand.

IT IS interesting to observe — said My Friend The Cynic — how easily in the course of time the real significance of a symbol is forgotten and how often it becomes a fetich of very different character from what it was originally intended to represent.

The Chinaman's pigtail, which he was condemned to wear by his Manchu conquerors as a ludicrous badge of his inferiority and a perpetual reminder of his slavery, soon came to be prized by him as his most distinguished adornment and even as his passport into heaven. So the Woman of to-day, in her reverence for her wedding ring as the insignia of her lofty position from which she can look down with sublime scorn upon her reckless sister who, without wait-

ing for the virtuous indulgence of this magic talisman, has taken care that she need not lead apes in Hell, forgets that this ring was originally bestowed upon her to indicate that she was a chattel of her lord and master and that in the beginning of its use it was worn, not on her finger, but around her neck like the collar of a favorite dog.

After centuries of self-abasement before their fetich we have observed among the Chinamen of to-day a notable awakening to the true significance of this symbol of their servitude, and by thousands they have hastened to rid themselves of the now offensive decoration. But it is very doubtful if Woman will as easily come to a comprehension of the real meaning of her badge of slavery; and

indeed this is very immaterial because the subjection of the modern woman is itself only a fiction of her mind, a shadow of the past without present substance.

The Militant Suffragette is proving in our day that Woman can win whatever she wants by her very lack of sense of the ridiculous. She has Man at her mercy, for he has the gift of logic, a knowledge of proportion, and a shamefaced idea of the fitness of things, none of which impose any restrictions upon a woman's course of action in the pursuit of what she desires

IT HAS always seemed to me — said My Friend The Cynic — that any true comprehension of the nature of Love would realize that it is like an ever-flowing spring which does not hold back its waters for the exclusive use of the one person who happens to have acquired a title deed to the ground from which it gushes forth, but ungrudgingly gives a mouthful to the thirsty wayfarer in serene confidence that there is always an abundance left for the title owner. Indeed it is in the freest flow of its waters that a spring is able to maintain its purity.

Therefore — he continued — I have never been able to be much impressed by that ideal of married life which is typified by the picture of Darby and Joan sitting

through life by the fireside stupidly content to play an interminable game of spiritual pingpong with their heart rays.

IT SEEMS to be wellnigh impossible — said My Friend The Cynic — for a married woman to realize that Love is a spiritual quality which grows through exercise, and not a material possession. She seems rather to regard it as a piece of personal property — something indeed like a pie — which only remains perfect and complete so long as she keeps it in her pantry out of sight of the hungry eyes that it might tempt, and even though it can thus give her nothing but the miserly joy of a conviction of sole ownership. She cannot rid herself of the fear that if a single fragment be given away she will have lost something, and that if many should share it, it would soon be all eaten up, with no crumb left for herself.

Too often, indeed, this morbid distrust seems to make her fear to indulge herself in any active use of her husband's affections and thus follows the natural result of their diminution, since an unused function speedily atrophies and a caged lark has little desire to sing.

BEHOLD — said My Friend The Cynic — I will speak to you in a parable: and I will tell you of

THE ROSE BUSH OF THE LOVING WOMAN.

A woman whose heart yearned for something of her own to love found growing in the garden of her home a beautiful rose bush. Daily she tended it with watchful care, and to the growing plant the sun seemed brighter for her smiles. With gladness it spread out its roots, firmly embracing the rich home soil, and joyously it put forth buds which opened into blossoms, filling the garden with fragrance and delighting the eye with their beauty.

And the Woman took great joy in her treasure and watched its

growth with pride; and from tim to time she plucked a flower an laid it in her bosom, and it fragrance warmed her heart b day and perfumed her dreams a night. And for a time she too joy in that her neighbors and th stranger who passed her doc stood long by her garden wal watching her rose bush and ma veling at the beauty of its blo soms and the richness of thei fragrance.

And the plant continued to gro in strength and in beauty, and a often as the Woman plucked blossom another grew in its plac and she missed nothing from he own happiness because of the jo that others had of her treasur But one day she saw anoth woman reach over the wall a

lovingly take a single blossom into her hand, that she might draw it closer to her face and breathe its fragrance. And then, although the stranger did not offer to pluck the flower, her heart grew bitter against her and she said to herself, "It is my own treasure; what should another find in it?"

And she went and dug up the bush and took it within her house and held it close to her breast and said to it:

"You are mine and mine only. I will not leave you any longer where others may see and covet you. The garden is too distant and too cold. I will keep you close in my arms, and for sunshine I will give you my smiles, and I will water your roots with my tears."

Thereafter she held the rose

bush jealously in her arms and lavished upon it her smiles and her kisses and her tears. But in a few days the blossoms had fallen, and the leaves were withered, and the rose bush was dead.

WHO shall command the heart? — asked My Friend The Cynic. The wind bloweth where it listeth and resents obstruction, and the emotions of affection will not brook compulsion or opposition. It is impossible to create Love by any mandate of authority, and it is equally futile to attempt to forbid it.

The greatest evils are not to be found in the exercise of freedom, however erratic its vagaries may be, but result more often from rebellion against ill-advised or incompetent attempts toward the restriction of free action.

Even the insane ravings of the wildest anarchist do little harm to the fabric of Government until they are precipitated into action by oppressive restraint. It is not

the flowing river, however
lent its current may become
works the greatest havoc
rather the bursting of the p
waters through the broken d

THE habit of continual self-analysis is as fatal to Love — said My Friend The Cynic — as the curiosity of the child is to the flower he has planted when he daily digs it up to see how its roots are growing.

THE Ardent Lover — said My Friend The Cynic — is apt to bewail the poverty of the language in that he is not able to invent for his inamorata new phrases of honeyed sweetness that have never been used before. But his Chloe never discovers any inadequacy or any triteness in the beautiful old words which, though he may have used them a thousand times before, and to a hundred different women, have yet a special meaning all her own. And in this guileless confidence she is quite right, for one of the chief wonders of God's universe is that Love is ever new because personality is always unique.

N LOVE as in Life — said My Friend The Cynic — the eatest danger is in taking one's lf too seriously. It has been id that "God's humor is the usic of the spheres," and the ore we cultivate this divine atibute, even in the serious affairs life, the more cheerful our cynism will become, which is only nother way of saying the sounder ill be our philosophy.

I HAVE been permitted to read a very beautiful poem — said My Friend The Cynic — which has for its keynote the lines:

I have loved many, the more and the
few,
I have loved many that I might love
you.

It has a double merit beyond its excellence as good verse. It pleasantly flatters the vanity of its present object and it is perennially serviceable, being always good for the next time.

IF I WERE to allow myself to parody Emerson's aphorism upon his reading — said My Friend The Cynic — I might be tempted to say that I have forgotten the women I have loved just as I have forgotten the dinners I have eaten, but they have all helped to make me. But before you resent the grossness of the simile, let me admit that the toy philosopher is easily seduced into epigram by the fascination of the phrase, and that in this instance, as is often the case, the truth is not much deeper than the surface of the sentence. My forgetfulness is only akin to that of Swinburne when with cheerful cynicism he wrote:

She has forgotten my kisses
And I have forgotten her name.

For indeed, the forgetfulness of any moment of love can only be of the immaterial externals and never of the divine realities of the passion. I confess that I do not now remember whether Julia had an aquiline nose or whether the dusky beauty's name was Lalage or Euphrosyne, but I have never forgotten and never shall forget the qualities deeper than feature or complexion or name which glowed through my inamorata's eyes with all that radiant warmth that cannot die, and so to-day brings back the real personality of each one of the dear memory maidens before my inward eye as vividly as if it were last night that she opened the windows of her soul to me instead of twenty years ago.

I HAVE found the text for my daily meditation — said My Friend The Cynic — in the remark in a recent anonymous novel that there are two ways of enjoying women — possession or restraint; but as it is of the second that I am going to speak there will be no need for the Censor to prick up his ears nor for the Prude to cover hers.

Father Ryan has written, "I have seen Thoughts in the Valley" and "I have heard Songs in the Silence," and his mystic sense will be subtly but completely intelligible to all those who have known the exaltation of participating in a wordless antiphony of lovers' confessions and felt the responsive thrill of a kiss electrically passing from eye to eye when the lips

might not be called upon to rei
this sweet service.

For indeed, as Maeterlinck
so beautifully indicated, it is in
silences that the real achievem
of life are brought to fruit
and therefore a woman sh
not believe a man's love bec
he tells her of it in the spc
words that were invented in o
that he might be able to lie,
rather from the pregnant
tences of his visible acts and
eloquent silences of his every
life.

N THE more or less scientific discussion of the principles of hat has become known as Eu-:nics — said My Friend The ynic — which is just now so ›mpletely occupying the femi-ne mind — partly, no doubt, om a laudable desire of the odern woman to absorb new ıowledge and open out her ıought to a broader view, and :t not a little because it gives :r a chance to openly chatter in :r clubs what heretofore she has lt compelled to whisper secretly . her closet — I am reminded of ıe witty disclaimer of any belief ı the theory of Dianism once ıade in my hearing by an eminent oman, who exclaimed, "Non-:nse! Every one knows that a ɔusewife can't even make good

bread when she deliberately set out to do it." And while I woul not go so far as the Wit who de clared that in Eugenics Scienc chases Love out of Marriage, neve theless in this, as in many othe things, I am continually findin myself confirmed in the convictio that the old happy hit or miss c God Almighty beats a whole lo of theories and *isms*.

HAVE patience with me in my absence — wrote The Trav-
ed Lady to My Friend The
ynic. I've been rocked on my
ng steamer voyage into a smiling
ldle-headed content. Our days
gether and even you seem so far
vay, as if I were looking at them
rough the wrong end of an opera-
ass, that it seems as though I
ver had done anything else but
il on this steamer. Deep down
think I still have some feelings,
it just now they seem locked in a
x of which I have mislaid the
y. You were always a good
low to understand moods, so
ke me as you find me, very
mfy and friendly — if I were a
t I'd purr — but not at all what
u could call intense.
That I am fond of you — he re-

plied — will appear from the fact that I continue to write to you. That I understand you should appear since I am quite willing to have the feelings locked up until such time as the key may be needed when it will be up to me to produce it — indeed that is probably why you cannot find it. And my comprehension is further proved by the fact that without losing the thought of you and certain very perfect memories I can enjoy my everyday life, taking pleasure in the fragrance — and taste — of an apple plucked from a bough near at hand without thereby losing my appreciation of rarer fruit nor yet being disposed to find fault with the apple because it is not a Florida orange.

›r the infallible recipe of consola-
›n for your cheerful cynic is,
hen you cannot kiss the dearest,
ss the nearest.

THERE is in Physics — said My Friend The Cynic — an immutable law known as the impenetrability of matter under which no two objects can possess the same place at the same time; and any attempt to compel such a fusion can only result in the displacing of one by the other. But they are ignorant of the psychology of the affections who imagine that there is any such law operating within the spiritual boundaries of a man's heart, and therefore the fact that I find that I love Phyllis with an intense passion does not signify that I have in the slightest degree wavered, nor am likely to waver, in my complete devotion to Penelope, who has for so long maintained her supremacy at my spiritual hearth.

The full-orbed Moon is and will continue to be the glorious goddess of my heavens, and her calm effulgence lights my pathway through the shades of night and spreads its peace throughout my life; but shall not my heart also rejoice in the scintillating beauty of each star that accompanies the queen of the night during her progress, and shall I not gratefully accept whatever light they can bestow when she is absent from my sight?

THE Complete Lover — said My Friend The Cynic — is like the well-trained musician, able to play upon many instruments and capable of drawing forth from each woman the harmonies which slumber within her awaiting the imperious touch of the sure hand of the music master.

He is not likely to be deluded by the tempting freshness of youth nor by the peaches and cream of the complexion of immaturity, for he knows that in spite of all the poetry that has been written in praise of the maiden,

Standing with reluctant feet
Where the brook and river meet,

her feelings are largely negative and that her vanity has probably

been stimulated into conceit by the army of callow admirers that hasten to throw themselves at her feet.

He has long since learned that no investment of love returns such dividends of joy as a little devotion to a neglected woman, and he also knows that he who cannot transform a faded face into the flush of joyous youth is a mere pretender at the Court of Love.

POE'S principles of criticism as to poetry might well be applied to Love — said My Friend The Cynic — in one of his reflective moods. He denied, you may remember, that it is possible to produce a really great poem beyond a certain short limit of length, and he explained the apparent contradiction to his rule found in some of the acknowledged masterpieces of epic or narrative verse by showing that so far from being one continuous poem these are really combinations of short poems. The more perfectly these sections are knit together the more the result appears to the uncritical eye as one sustained effort, but in reality it is nothing of the sort.

Now in Love as in Poetry long drawn out experience cannot main-

tain itself at the highest level, and while it is not necessary that the lover shall be a varietist, any more than it is necessary that the poet shall be a writer only of unrelated lyrics in various forms of verse, nevertheless he will best achieve perfection in his love making who knows when to begin, when to possess, and when to kiss and part — even though the parting may be only temporary and though, as in the case of a well-mated married couple, no separation may be visible to outside eyes.

But when we consider those love episodes which form a natural part of the average man's life, then truly the perfection of the short poem becomes apparent and the joy most abiding and satisfying

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is for him who knows when to reach, when to take, and when to let go.

Many a beautiful romance that like a sweet perfume ought to have been kept in the heart to brighten and refresh years of after life as a fragrant memory has become a nightmare of regret and aversion by the attempt to cling to what was meant to be only for a perfect hour and to drag it out until every shred of the romance is worn threadbare.

The dried petals of the dead rose give a pleasant odor whenever we open the rose jar, but the withered flowers kept in the vase in daily sight soon become offensive.

THE question that is puzzling me now — wrote The Distant Lady to The Hero of Her Romance — is, *Do I really love you? Do you really love me?*

I do not see why either of you should puzzle your heads with that question now — commented My Friend The Cynic — when if you were both madly in love you could not devote yourselves to each other. The real question for both of you to decide is, did you love each other when Fate gave you the opportunity to enjoy love? If so you need have no qualms as to your right to take comfort in your memories.

THE longer I live—soliloquized My Friend The Cynic—the more I realize that our only priceless and most perfect possession is OUR PAST. Henley was well aware of this when he wrote:

What is to come we know not, but we know
That what has been was good. Was good to show,
Better to hide and best of all to bear.
We are the masters of the days that were.

The future we cannot know, but we may be sure that our anticipations of it will be likely to prove only delusive phantoms.

"The present is life and life is good to live," but the present is at best only a compensating alloy

of pleasure and counterbalancing pain. But the past is our own secure possession that so long as the power of memory shall endure no one can take from us. Of it alone we can retain all the pleasure and forget all the pain.

WHEN *we consider the way in which seemingly impossible situations work themselves out — said My Friend The Cynic — we are forced to the conclusion that God and the Devil make things quite shipshape between them.*